

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**BA-3096**

**Belltown African American Survey District**

**Baltimore County, MD**

**1850ca.-1960s**

The Belltown African American Survey District is located in Owings Mills in the Fourth District of Baltimore County. The survey district is situated between the Northwest Expressway (I-795) and Reisterstown Road (Rt. 140). An African American community in Belltown is difficult to discern with the mixture of modern housing and the historic houses built for the white residents. The center of the African American community is the Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church. The land on which the church was built was purchased by the trustees of Bethal Church in 1867. In 1877, Pleasant Hill Road is a paved road connecting Baltimore Pike and Deer Park Road. On the north side of Pleasant Hill Road are three residents, John Archibald, A. Nelson, and N. Willer. Residents on the south side of the road in 1877 include Jason S. Disney and P. Trout. The south side of Tollgate Road in 1877 includes C. Coleman, C. Fairfax, P. Breckenridge, and an African American School House. The school house is sited in approximately the same area as Mount Pleasant Church.

The present structures are comprised of 1940s to 1960s one-story dwellings as well as one mid-19th century house. One definite reminder of the African American community in Belltown is the Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and its associated cemetery at 235 Tollgate Road. The current vernacular brick structure dates to 1994-1995 after the historic church was damaged in several serious fires. Approximately fifty headstones are slightly organized throughout cemetery. The headstones are either marble or granite, several are broken, and they are dominated by rounded upright stones with several pillar markers. The six houses between the northwest corner of Tollgate Road and Ritters Lane range in date from 1941 to 1961. All but one of these houses are one to one-and-a-half stories high. They are three bays wide and their roof forms include front-gable, side-gable, and hipped. These vernacular dwellings are constructed of concrete block or wood frame clad with vinyl or aluminum siding and feature interior brick chimneys.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☐ no ☒

Property Name: Belltown African American Survey District Inventory Number: BA-3096  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Historic district: X yes ☐ no  
City: Owings Mill Zip Code: 21117-3223 County: Baltimore County  
USGS Quadrangle(s): Reisterstown  
Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Account ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Map Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Project: BA451A11 Agency: SHA  
Agency Prepared By: McCormick Taylor, Inc.  
Preparer's Name: Jerry Clouse Date Prepared: 2/13/2009  
Documentation is presented in: Elizabeth Anderson Comer/Archeology 2008  
Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility recommended X Eligibility not recommended  
Criteria:    A    B    C    D Considerations:    A    B    C    D    E    F    G  
*Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:*  
Name of the District/Property: \_\_\_\_\_  
Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Eligible:    yes Listed:    yes  
Site visit by MHT Staff    yes X no Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Property and Justification:** *(Please attach map and photo)*

Several properties were previously surveyed as part of the Belltown African American Survey District. These included the Mt. Pleasant AME Church (BA-654) and the Merryman-Bell House (BA-667) located on Pleasant Hill Road. In addition, this discontinuous survey district includes four buildings at the intersection of Tollgate Road and Ritters Lane. Due to changes and alterations to the original buildings in this district and due to modern intrusions between these properties, the district lacks the integrity and cohesiveness of a National Register eligible historic district. The other four buildings include:

200 Tollgate Road: This c. 1947, one-and-a-half story, frame, Minimal Traditional style house is built on a raised basement of concrete block. The house is sheathed with vinyl siding and its roof is covered with asphalt shingles. It has modern, one-over-one, double hung sash windows. The central double-door entrance consists of single glass doors which open onto the wrap-around deck on the east and north sides of the house. The house has been completely refurbished in the late twentieth century and therefore does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered individually eligible for architecture or for its association with the Belltown African American Survey District.

96 Ritters Lane: The house at 96 Ritters Lane is a 1961, one-story, four-bay, frame house with characteristics of the Ranch style.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility not recommended X  
Criteria:    A    B    C    D Considerations:    A    B    C    D    E    F    G  
MHT Comments:

Jim Zulawski  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

P. Kent  
Reviewer, National Register Program

6/17/09

Date

6/17/09  
Date

The characteristics which are seen on this house include the ribbon windows and the low pitched hipped roof with a moderately wide overhang. The house is clad in a combination of vertical wood siding and brick. A nearly central brick chimney pierces the ridge line. A modern bay window has been installed in the northernmost bay of the façade. This house is a modest example of its style and is not considered of exceptional significance either architecturally or in its association with the Belltown African American Survey District.

94 Ritters Lane: The house at 94 Ritters Lane is a 1953, one-story, four-bay, frame house with characteristics of the Minimal Traditional style. The house rests on a concrete block foundation, is sheathed with modern vinyl siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A modern deck has been added at the front entrance, and a ramped deck has been added at the south side to provide access to the addition to the rear of the house. The house is not a distinctive example of its style and the house has suffered numerous changes over the years. Therefore it is not individually eligible and lacks sufficient integrity to be considered eligible in association with the Belltown African American Survey District.

92 Ritters Lane: The house at 92 Ritters Lane is a 1947, one-story, concrete-block house with no particular architectural style. A modern glass-enclosed porch has been added to the front of the house. Generally, the windows in the house are one-over-one double hung sash. The window sills consist of rowlock brick. The hipped roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles, and there is a chimney placed asymmetrically on the ridge line. There is an addition to the rear of the house. The house is not a distinctive example of any style of architecture and has suffered numerous changes and additions over the years. Therefore, it is not individually eligible, and lacks sufficient integrity to be considered eligible in association with the Belltown African American Survey District.

Mt. Pleasant AME Church (BA-654) at 235 Tollgate Road

The two-story, gable-front, brick Mt. Pleasant AME Church, constructed in 1994-95 has its main entrance in the gable-front extension along the east elevation of the church. The telescoped, pavilion gable front contains a large, centered circular stained glass window. There is a large, multi-paned skylight on the ridge line at the front of the church. The main entrance has double glass doors surrounded on all sides with square glass plates. There is a glass-block cross above this entrance. An asphalt covered ramp with pipe railing leads up to the entrance, and an asphalt covered parking lot immediately adjoins the church to the east. There is a late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century cemetery with no apparent design or layout adjoining the parking lot to the east containing a mixture of marble and granite tombstones.

Ordinarily, cemeteries and religious structures are not considered eligible for the National Register unless they meet certain criteria exceptions. As a relatively modest late twentieth century church, the Mt. Pleasant AME Church does not possess exceptional architectural significance. The adjoining cemetery is not known to possess graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.

Mt. Pleasant AME Church is not historically significant. The property is not directly associated with events or patterns significant to local, state, or national history (Criterion A). The property is not associated with any person important to local, state, or national history (Criterion B). The building does not possess exceptional characteristics of homes of the period, is not a work of a master, and does not possess high artistic value (Criterion C). The property does not appear likely to yield significant archaeological information about history or prehistory (Criterion D). Mt. Pleasant AME Church is recommended not individually eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. This property was previously a center of the African American community of Belltown.

Merryman-Bell House (BA-667) at 137 Pleasant Hill Road

The Merryman-Bell House is a c. 1866 two-and-a-half story, three-bay, vernacular style, frame, I-house with a central passage. There is a two-and-a-half story, two-bay, addition to east gable end which may have been added in the early twentieth century.

#### MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility not recommended \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria: \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D Considerations: \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G

MHT Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer, National Register Program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

There is also a shed-roof addition to the east side of the two-bay addition. A brick chimney pierces the ridge line where the addition has been built to the main block. The original section of the house rests on a partially stuccoed stone foundation, but the shed-roof addition rests on a concrete foundation. The entire house is sheathed with modern vinyl siding, and the shallow-pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The house's cornice and soffit are also covered with a modern synthetic material. A raised front porch with turned posts supporting a hipped roof shields the three-bay façade of the main block. There is a modern, four-bay, shed-roof porch attached to the rear elevation. Five, square posts support the porch on a concrete slab foundation. There is a bulkhead cellar entrance located on the west elevation.

Except for the ribbon window on the first-floor façade of the addition and the second floor, rear elevation bay window of the addition, the windows throughout the house are modern, one-over-one, double hung sash. There is a single modern octagonal window in the façade of the shed-roof addition. There are no windows in the gable ends except the louvered windows at the attic level. All of the windows, except the rear elevation bay window and the octagonal window, have modern louvered shutters attached. The front door is a modern aluminum storm door with rectangular glass panels at the top.

The Merryman-Bell House does not retain sufficient integrity to be individually eligible for its architectural significance but does retain sufficient integrity to be a contributing element of a historic district if one were present.

The Belltown African American Survey District is not directly associated with events or patterns significant to local, state, or national history (Criterion A). The property is not associated with any person important to local, state, or national history (Criterion B). The buildings do not possess exceptional characteristics of homes of the period, are not a work of a master, and does not possess high artistic value (Criterion C). The property does not appear likely to yield significant archaeological information about history or prehistory (Criterion D). The Belltown African American Survey District is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility not recommended \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria:    \_\_\_ A    \_\_\_ B    \_\_\_ C    \_\_\_ D    Considerations:    \_\_\_ A    \_\_\_ B    \_\_\_ C    \_\_\_ D    \_\_\_ E    \_\_\_ F    \_\_\_ G

MHT Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer, National Register Program\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## CAPSULE SUMMARY

### Belltown African American Survey District

BA-3096

Baltimore County, MD

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#### 200 Tollgate Road

This c. 1947, one-and-a-half story, frame, Minimal Traditional style house is built on a raised basement of concrete block. The house is sheathed with vinyl siding and its roof is covered with asphalt shingles. It has modern, one-over-one, double hung sash windows. The central double-door entrance consists of single glass doors which open onto the wrap-around deck on the east and north sides of the house.

#### 96 Ritters Lane

The house at 96 Ritters Lane is a 1961, one-story, four-bay, frame house with characteristics of the Ranch style. The characteristics which are seen on this house include the ribbon windows and the low pitched hipped roof with a moderately wide overhang. The house is clad in a combination of vertical wood siding and brick. A nearly central brick chimney pierces the ridge line. A modern bay window has been installed in the northernmost bay of the façade.

#### 94 Ritters Lane

The house at 94 Ritters Lane is a 1953, one-story, four-bay, frame house with characteristics of the Minimal Traditional style. The house rests on a concrete block foundation, is sheathed with modern vinyl siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A modern deck has been added at the front entrance, and a ramped deck has been added at the south side to provide access to the addition to the rear of the house.

#### 92 Ritters Lane

The house at 92 Ritters Lane is a 1947, one-story, concrete-block house with no particular architectural style. A modern glass-enclosed porch has been added to the front of the house. Generally, the windows in the house are one-over-one double hung sash. The window sills consist of rowlock brick. The hipped roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles, and there is a chimney placed asymmetrically on the ridge line. There is an addition to the rear of the house.

#### Mt. Pleasant AME Church (BA-654)

235 Tollgate Road

Baltimore County, MD

The two-story, gable-front, brick Mt. Pleasant AME Church, constructed in 1994-95 has its main entrance in the gable-front extension along the east elevation of the church. The telescoped, pavilion gable front contains a large, centered circular stained glass window. There is a large, multi-paned skylight on the ridge line at the front of the church. The main entrance has double glass doors surrounded on all sides with square glass plates. There is a glass-block cross above this entrance. An asphalt covered ramp with pipe railing leads up to the entrance, and an asphalt covered parking lot immediately adjoins the church to the east. There is a late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century cemetery with no apparent design or layout adjoining the parking lot to the east containing a mixture of marble and granite tombstones.

#### Merryman-Bell House (BA-667)

137 Pleasant Hill Road

Baltimore County, MD

The Merryman-Bell house is a c. 1866 two-and-a-half story, three-bay, vernacular style, frame, I-house with a central passage. There is a two-and-a-half story, two-bay, addition to east gable end which may have been added in the early twentieth century. There is also a shed-roof addition to the east side of the two-bay addition. A brick chimney pierces the ridge line where the addition has been built to the main block. The original section of the house rests on a partially stuccoed stone foundation, but the shed-roof addition rests on a concrete foundation. The entire house is sheathed with modern vinyl siding, and the shallow-pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The house's cornice and soffit are also covered with a modern synthetic material. A raised front porch with turned posts supporting a hipped roof shields the three-bay façade of the main block. There is a modern, four-bay, shed-roof porch attached to the rear elevation. Five, square posts support the porch on a concrete slab foundation. There is a bulkhead cellar entrance located on the west elevation.

Except for the ribbon window on the first-floor façade of the addition and the second floor, rear elevation bay window of the addition, the windows throughout the house are modern, one-over-one, double hung sash. There is a single modern octagonal window in the façade of the shed-roof addition. There are no windows in the gable ends except the louvered windows at the attic level. All of the windows, except the rear elevation bay window and the octagonal window, have modern louvered shutters attached. The front door is a modern aluminum storm door with rectangular glass panels at the top.



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**Belltown African American Survey District**

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**1850ca.-1960s**

The Belltown African American Survey District is located in Owings Mills in the Fourth District of Baltimore County. The survey district is situated between the Northwest Expressway (I-795) and Reisterstown Road (Rt. 140). An African American community in Belltown is difficult to discern with the mixture of modern housing and the historic houses built for the white residents. The center of the African American community is the Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church. The land on which the church was built was purchased by the trustees of Bethal Church in 1867. In 1877, Pleasant Hill Road is a paved road connecting Baltimore Pike and Deer Park Road. On the north side of Pleasant Hill Road are three residents, John Archibald, A. Nelson, and N. Willer. Residents on the south side of the road in 1877 include Jason S. Disney and P. Trout. The south side of Tollgate Road in 1877 includes C. Coleman, C. Fairfax, P. Breckenridge, and an African American School House. The school house is sited in approximately the same area as Mount Pleasant Church.

The present structures are comprised of 1940s to 1960s one-story dwellings as well as one mid-19th century house. One definite reminder of the African American community in Belltown is the Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and its associated cemetery at 235 Tollgate Road. The current vernacular brick structure dates to 1994-1995 after the historic church was damaged in several serious fires. Approximately fifty headstones are slightly organized throughout cemetery. The headstones are either marble or granite, several are broken, and they are dominated by rounded upright stones with several pillar markers. The six houses between the northwest corner of Tollgate Road and Ritters Lane range in date from 1941 to 1961. All but one of these houses are one to one-and-a-half stories high. They are three bays wide and their roof forms include front-gable, side-gable, and hipped. These vernacular dwellings are constructed of concrete block or wood frame clad with vinyl or aluminum siding and feature interior brick chimneys.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

BA-3096

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Belltown African American Survey District  
other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street and number Tollgate Road, Pleasant Hill Road, Ritters Lane \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Owing's Mills \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity  
county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple Ownership  
street and number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone Not Available  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel: tax map 58  
city, town Towson liber \_\_\_\_\_ folio \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- \_\_\_\_ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
\_\_\_\_ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
\_\_\_\_ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
\_\_\_\_ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
\_\_\_\_ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
\_\_\_\_ Historic Structure Report or Research Report  
\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

| Category                                     | Ownership                                   | Current Function                             | Resource Count   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture         | Contributing Noncontributing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade      | <u>7</u> <u>2</u> buildings  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure           | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> defense             | <u>1</u> <u>_____</u> sites  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic | <u>_____</u> <u>_____</u> structures   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> education           | <u>_____</u> <u>_____</u> objects  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> funerary            | <u>8</u> <u>2</u> Total  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> government          |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> health care         |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> industry            |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape           |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture  |  |
|  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> social              |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation      |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress    |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> unknown             |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use   |  |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other:              |  |
|  |   |  | <b>Number of Contributing Resources<br/>previously listed in the Inventory</b> |
|  |   |  | <u>1</u>   |

## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA-3096

### Condition

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> altered      |

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Belltown African American Survey District is a small area located in Owings Mills just southwest of Reisterstown Road. Three streets encompass the area; Pleasant Hill Road, Tollgate Road, and Ritters Lane. The current African American residential community of Belltown is difficult to discern amidst the mixture of modest and high style historic and non-historic houses. The present structures are comprised of 1940s to 1960s one-story dwellings as well as one mid-19th century house that may or may not have been African American residences. Bordering this community to the east is the Owings Mill High School and a more stylized grouping of Queen Anne-style houses on Ritters Lane. To the south and west is the Northwest Expressway (I-795). Several suburban residential developments were built in the 1990s and turn of the 21st century. The streets within the survey district are paved however they lack sidewalks.

One definite reminder of the African American community in Belltown is the Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and its associated cemetery at 235 Tollgate Road. The current vernacular brick structure dates to 1994-1995 after the historic church was damaged in several serious fires. The brick church has a long rectangular footprint with a large projecting front-gable vestibule set perpendicular to the nave. Oriented towards the cemetery (parallel to the road), the entry has a one set of centered double-leaf glass doors. Centered above the doors is a glass-block cross. The church has two rows of a basketweave pattern on the façade.

The Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church cemetery is sited directly to the east of the church itself. Approximately fifty headstones are slightly organized throughout. The headstones are either marble or granite, several are broken, and they are dominated by rounded upright stones with several pillar markers. In addition to a handful of unmarked headstones there are associated footstones as well. A few of the graves lack any markers and can be identified with the depression in the ground. Many of the interments date to the turn of the 1890s and early 1900's. Names include Parker, Joshua Robinson (d. 1902), Hall, Rebecca Jones (d. 1911), Davis, Clark, Addison (d. 1906), Thomas Thornton (d. 1896), Snowden, Martha Norris (d. 1885), and Fleming.

The six houses between the northwest corner of Tollgate Road and Ritters Lane extending a quarter of a mile north range in date from 1941 to 1961. Sited on a rectangular lot of a similar size, each house is surrounded by trees, shrubs, foundation plantings, and several have perimeter fencing.

All but one of these houses is one story, the exception is one-and-a-half stories high. They are three bays wide and their roof forms include front-gable, side-gable, and hip. These vernacular dwellings are constructed of concrete block or wood frame clad with vinyl or aluminum siding and feature interior brick chimneys. These houses each have detached garages or separate sheds to the rear of the house.



## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-3096

| Period  | Areas of Significance                                  | Check and justify below                               |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                   | <input type="checkbox"/> economics                    | <input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine        | <input type="checkbox"/> performing arts     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology                    | <input type="checkbox"/> education                    | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy          |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture                  | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> art                           | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/<br>recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000-                | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage   | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science             |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> communications                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/<br>settlement   | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> social history      |  |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning |   | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry      | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation      |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation                  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> other:              |  |

**Specific dates** 1846, 1994

**Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1880-1950s

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Belltown African American Survey District is located in Owings Mills in the Fourth District of Baltimore County. The survey district is situated between the Northwest Expressway (I-795) and Reisterstown Road (Rt. 140). An African American community in Belltown is difficult to discern with the mixture of modern housing and the historic houses built for the white residents. Very little historical information regarding the African American community of Belltown was available to the researcher at this time.

The Fourth District is bounded to the north by the Fifth District, to the east by the Eighth District, to the south by the Second and Third Districts and to the west by Carroll County. The Western Maryland Railroad runs from Owings Mill northwest to Finksburg.(1) In 1881, Scharf briefly describes Owings Mills as being on the Western Maryland Railroad with a population of 300 people. He continues stating that Gwynn's Falls and the Westminster turnpike pass through the village.

The center of the African American community is the Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church. The land on which the church was built was purchased by the trustees of Bethel Church in 1867.(2) In 1877, Pleasant Hill Road is a paved road connecting Baltimore Pike and Deer Park Road. On the north side of Pleasant Hill Road are three residents, John Archibald, A. Nelson, and N. Willer. Residents on the south side of the road in 1877 include Jason S. Disney and P. Trout. The south side of Tollgate Road in 1877 includes C. Coleman, C. Fairfax, P. Breckenridge, and an African American School House.(3) The school house is sited in approximately the same area as Mount Pleasant Church.

A brick rectangular church was constructed in 1884 for the Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church congregation. This church suffered several serious fires in the early 1990s, the last one in December 21, 1994. Mount Pleasant Church was rebuilt at this time as a vernacular brick structure.(4)

### ENDNOTES

1. J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men (Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA), p. 854.
2. Maryland Inventory Historic Places, Form BA-654, Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church.
3. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877).
4. Maryland Inventory Historic Places, Form BA-654, Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. BA-3096

See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 15 acres

Acreage of historical setting Unknown

Quadrangle name Reisterstown, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Belttown African American Survey District is located in the town of Owing's Mills in the Fourth District of Baltimore County. The properties within the survey district have historically been associated with tax map 58 since their construction.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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|                   |  |           |                |
|-------------------|--|-----------|----------------|
| name/title        | Kristie Baynard, Architectural Historian |           |                |
| organization      | E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc.                   | dat       | 3/24/2003      |
| street and number | 1121 Fifth Street, NW                    | telephone | 202/393-1199   |
| city or town      | Washington                               | state DC  | zip code 20001 |

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3096

Name Belltown African American Survey District

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

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Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

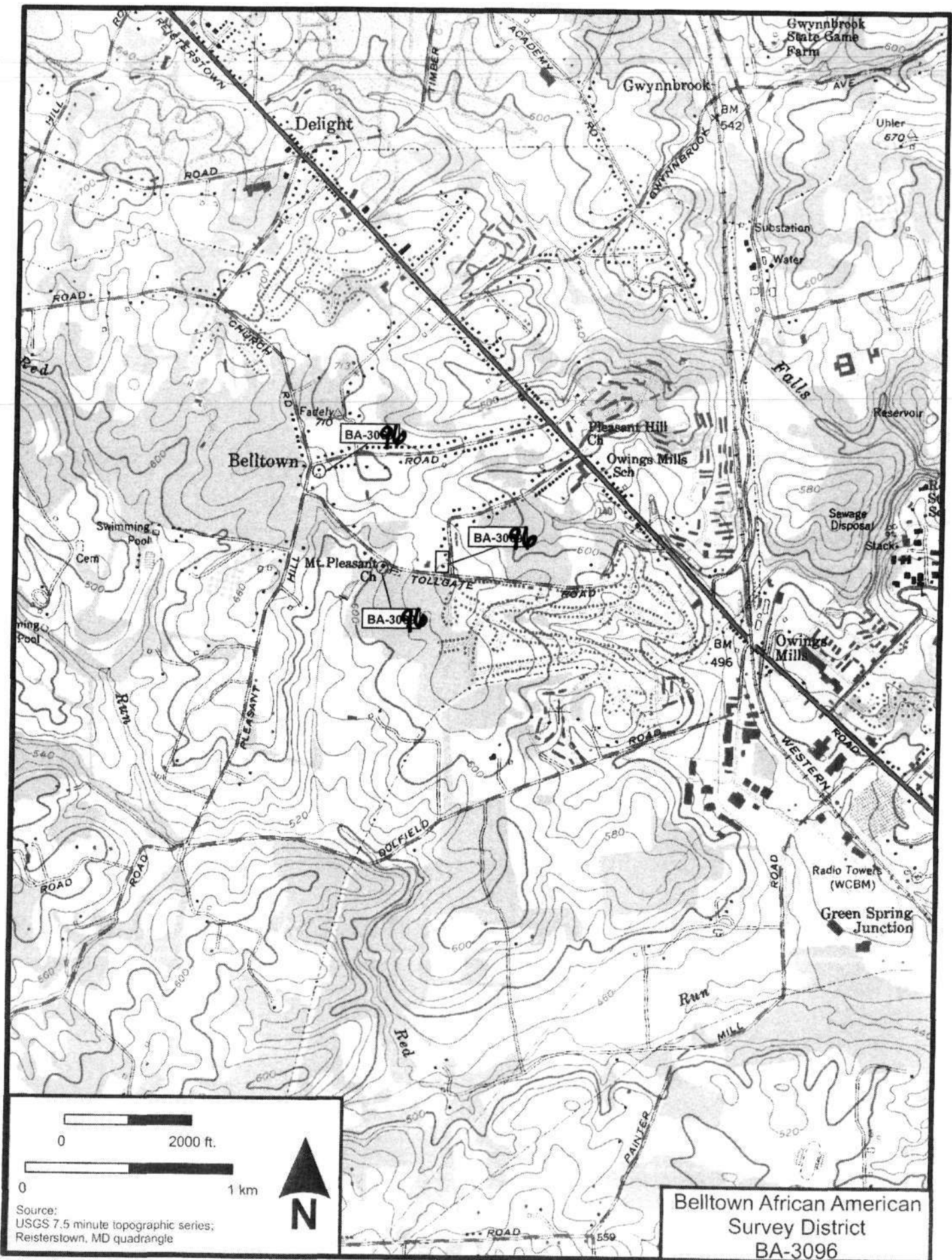
Baltimore County Historic Inventory and Maryland Inventory Historic Places.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

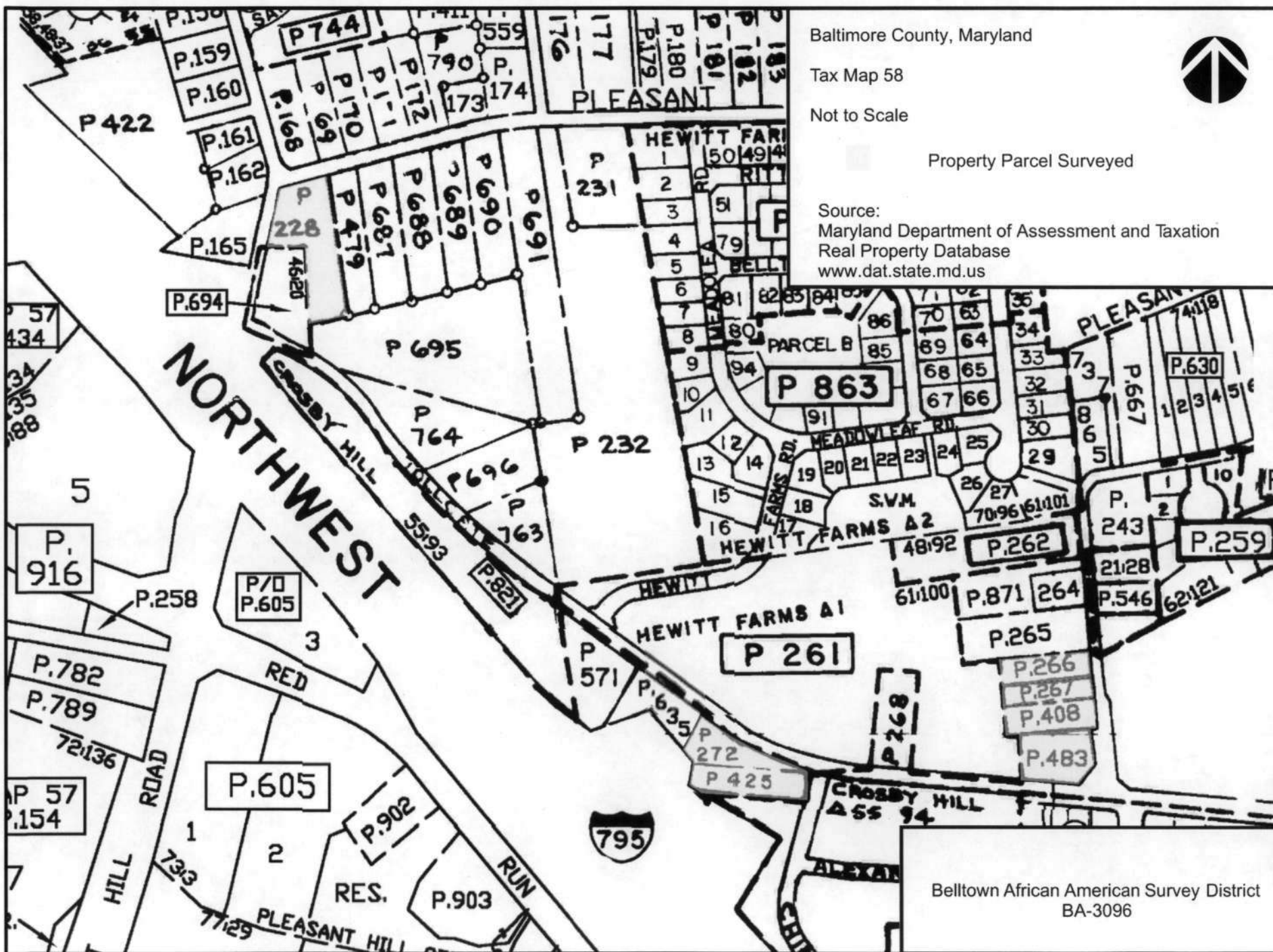
Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.











BA-3096

Belltown African American  
Survey District

Baltimore County, MD

Charles D. Crump

2/2009

View looking north at  
Street Scene, Ritters Lane  
MD HPO

1/11

METROPHOTO <No. 17 >024 BN  
0797 033+2-1 N N-92 GR08 2079.0/100.0



BA-3096

Belltown African American Survey/ District

200 Tollgate Road

Baltimore County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009

MDSHPO

Looking southwest at the north and  
east elevations of 200 Tollgate Rd.

2/11

METROPHOTO <No. 19 >026 BN

0797 033+2-1 N-2-38 AC+01 GR08 2079.0/100.0





BA-3096

Belltown African American Survey District

92 Ritters Lane

Baltimore County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009

MD SHPO

Looking northwest at south and east  
elevations of 92 Ritters Lane

3/11

METROPHOTO <No. 21 >028 BN

0797 033+2-1 N-6 43 ACh-02 GR08 2079.0/100.0



BA-3096

Belltown African American Survey

94 Ritters Lane

Baltimore County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009

MD SHPO

Looking north west at east and south  
elevations of 94 Ritters Lane.

4/11

METROPHOTO <No. 20 >027 BN  
0797 033+2-1 N-6-28 GR08 2079.0/100.0



BA-3096

Belltown African American Survey District

96 Ritters Lane

Baltimore County, MD

Cherry Hill Road

2 2000

MD SHPO

Looking north west toward east end  
south elevations of 96 Ritters Lane

5/11

METROPHOTO <No. 18 > 025 BN

0797 033+2-1 N-1-37 ACh-02 GR08 Z079.0/100.0





BA-3096

Belltown African American Survey District

Mt. Pleasant AME Church (BA-654)

255 Toigate Road

Baltimore County, MD

nearby Richmond

2/2009

MD SHPO

view looking northwest toward south and  
east elevations of church

METROPHOTO <No. 14 >018 BN

0797 033+2-1 N-2-71 GR08 2079.0/100.0

6/11



BA-3096  
Belltown African American Survey District  
Mt. Pleasant AME Church (BA-654)  
235 Tollgate road  
Baltimore County, MD  
circa 1900

2/3/09  
MD SHDO  
view Looking southeast along Tollgate  
Road toward Mt. Pleasant AME Church.

METROPHOTO <No. 16 >023 BN  
0797 033+2-1 N-1-13 GR08 2079.0/100.0

7/11



BA-3096

Belltown African American Socy/ District

Mt. Pleasant AME Church (BA-654)

233 Tollgate Road

Calhoun County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009

MD SAPO

View Looking southeast at Mt. Pleasant

AME Church Cemetery

METROPHOTO <No. 15 >020 BN

0797 033+2-1 N N-35 GR08 2079.0/100.0

8/11





BA-30960070

Belltown African American Senior District  
Meeting Room - 1st Floor (BA-657)

137 Pleasant Hill Road

Baltimore County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009

MD SHPO

Looking Southwest at North and East  
Elevation

METROPHOTO <No. 10 >007 BN

0797 033+2-1 N-7-49 AC+01 ACH-01 GR08 2079.0/100.0

9/11



BA-3096

Belltown African American Survey District

Maryman-Bell House (BA-667)

137 Pleasant Hill Road

Baltimore County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009

MD SHPO

Looking Southeast at north end west  
elevations

METROPHOTO<No. 9 >016 BN  
0797 033+2-1 N-9-31 GR08 MoF 2079.0/100.0

10/11



BA-3096

Belltown African American Social District  
Merriman-Bell House (RA-667)  
1111 Pleasant Hill Road

Baltimore County, MD

Charles Richmond

2/2009  
MD SHDO

METROPHOTO<No. 8 >014 BN  
0797 033+2-1 N-6-33 ACH-01 GR08 MoF 2079.0/100.0

Looking north east at south and  
west elevations

11/11



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3096

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Belltown African American Survey District

other

### 2. Location

street and number Tollgate Road, Pleasant Hill Road not for publication

city, town Owing's Mills vicinity

county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Multiple Ownership

street and number telephone Not Available

city, town state zip code

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel: tax map 58

city, town Towson liber folio

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report  
☐ Other

### 6. Classification

| Category                                     |  | Ownership                                   | Current Function                             |  | Resource Count   |                 |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|-----------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district |  | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape           | Contributing   | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)         |  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade      | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture  | 7  | 2               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure           |  | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> defense             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion | 1  |                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                |  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic | <input type="checkbox"/> social              |  |                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object              |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> education           | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation      |  |                 |
|  |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> funerary            | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress    | 8  | 2               |
|  |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> government          | <input type="checkbox"/> unknown             |  |                 |
|  |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> health care         | <input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use   |  |                 |
|  |  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> industry            | <input type="checkbox"/> other:              |  |                 |
|  |  |   |  |  | Number of Contributing Resources<br>previously listed in the Inventory |                 |
|  |  |   |  |  | 1  |                 |

## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA-3096

### Condition

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> altered      |

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Belltown African American Survey District is a small area located in Owings Mills just southwest of Reisterstown Road. Three streets encompass the area; Pleasant Hill Road, Tollgate Road, and Ritters Lane. The current African American residential community of Belltown is difficult to discern amidst the mixture of modest and high style historic and non-historic houses. The present structures are comprised of 1940s to 1960s one-story dwellings as well as one mid-19th century house that may or may not have been African American residences. Bordering this community to the east is the Owings Mill High School and a more stylized grouping of Queen Anne-style houses on Ritters Lane. To the south and west is the Northwest Expressway (I-795). Several suburban residential developments were built in the 1990s and turn of the 21st century. The streets within the survey district are paved however they lack sidewalks.

One definite reminder of the African American community in Belltown is the Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church and its associated cemetery at 235 Tollgate Road. The current vernacular brick structure dates to 1994-1995 after the historic church was damaged in several serious fires. The brick church has a long rectangular footprint with a large projecting front-gable vestibule set perpendicular to the nave. Oriented towards the cemetery (parallel to the road), the entry has a one set of centered double-leaf glass doors. Centered above the doors is a glass-block cross. The church has two rows of a basketweave pattern on the façade.

The Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church cemetery is sited directly to the east of the church itself. Approximately fifty headstones are slightly organized throughout. The headstones are either marble or granite, several are broken, and they are dominated by rounded upright stones with several pillar markers. In addition to a handful of unmarked headstones there are associated footstones as well. A few of the graves lack any markers and can be identified with the depression in the ground. Many of the interments date to the turn of the 1890s and early 1900's. Names include Parker, Joshua Robinson (d. 1902), Hall, Rebecca Jones (d. 1911), Davis, Clark, Addison (d. 1906), Thomas Thornton (d. 1896), Snowden, Martha Norris (d. 1885), and Fleming.

The six houses between the northwest corner of Tollgate Road and Ritters Lane extending a quarter of a mile north range in date from 1941 to 1961. Sited on a rectangular lot of a similar size, each house is surrounded by trees, shrubs, foundation plantings, and several have perimeter fencing.

All but one of these houses is one story, the exception is one-and-a-half stories high. They are three bays wide and their roof forms include front-gable, side-gable, and hipped. These vernacular dwellings are constructed of concrete block or wood frame clad with vinyl or aluminum siding and feature interior brick chimneys. These houses each have detached garages or separate sheds to the rear of the house.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-3096

| Period  | Areas of Significance                                  | Check and justify below                               |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                   | <input type="checkbox"/> economics                    | <input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine        | <input type="checkbox"/> performing arts     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology                    | <input type="checkbox"/> education                    | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy          |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture                  | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> art                           | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/<br>recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000-                | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage   | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science             |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> communications                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/<br>settlement   | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> social history      |  |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning |   | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry      | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation      |  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation                  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> other:              |  |

Specific dates 1846, 1994

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1880-1950s

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Belttown African American Survey District is located in Owings Mills in the Fourth District of Baltimore County. The survey district is situated between the Northwest Expressway (I-795) and Reisterstown Road (Rt. 140). An African American community in Belttown is difficult to discern with the mixture of modern housing and the historic houses built for the white residents. Very little historical information regarding the African American community of Belttown was available to the researcher at this time.

The Fourth District is bounded to the north by the Fifth District, to the east by the Eighth District, to the south by the Second and Third Districts and to the west by Carroll County. The Western Maryland Railroad runs from Owing's Mill northwest to Finksburg.(1) In 1881, Scharf briefly describes Owing's Mills as being on the Western Maryland Railroad with a population of 300 people. He continues stating that Gwynn's Falls and the Westminster turnpike pass through the village.

The center of the African American community is the Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church. The land on which the church was built was purchased by the trustees of Bethal Church in 1867.(2) In 1877, Pleasant Hill Road is a paved road connecting Baltimore Pike and Deer Park Road. On the north side of Pleasant Hill Road are three residents, John Archibald, A. Nelson, and N. Willer. Residents on the south side of the road in 1877 include Jason S. Disney and P. Trout. The south side of Tollgate Road in 1877 includes C. Coleman, C. Fairfax, P. Breckenridge, and an African American School House.(3) The school house is sited in approximately the same area as Mount Pleasant Church.

A brick rectangular church was constructed in 1884 for the Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church congregation. This church suffered several serious fires in the early 1990s, the last one in December 21, 1994. Mount Pleasant Church was rebuilt at this time as a vernacular brick structure.(4)

### ENDNOTES

1. J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men (Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA), p. 854.
2. Maryland Inventory Historic Places, Form BA-654, Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church.
3. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877).
4. Maryland Inventory Historic Places, Form BA-654, Mount Pleasant A.M.E. Church.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. BA-3096

See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 15 acres

Acreage of historical setting Unknown

Quadrangle name Reisterstown, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Belltown African American Survey District is located in the town of Owing's Mills in the Fourth District of Baltimore County. The properties within the survey district have historically been associated with tax map 58 since their construction.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Kristie Baynard, Architectural Historian

organization E.H.T. Traceries, Inc.

date 3/24/03

street and number 1121 Fifth Street, NW

telephone 202/393-1199

city or town Washington

state DC zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3096

Name Belltown African American Survey District

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

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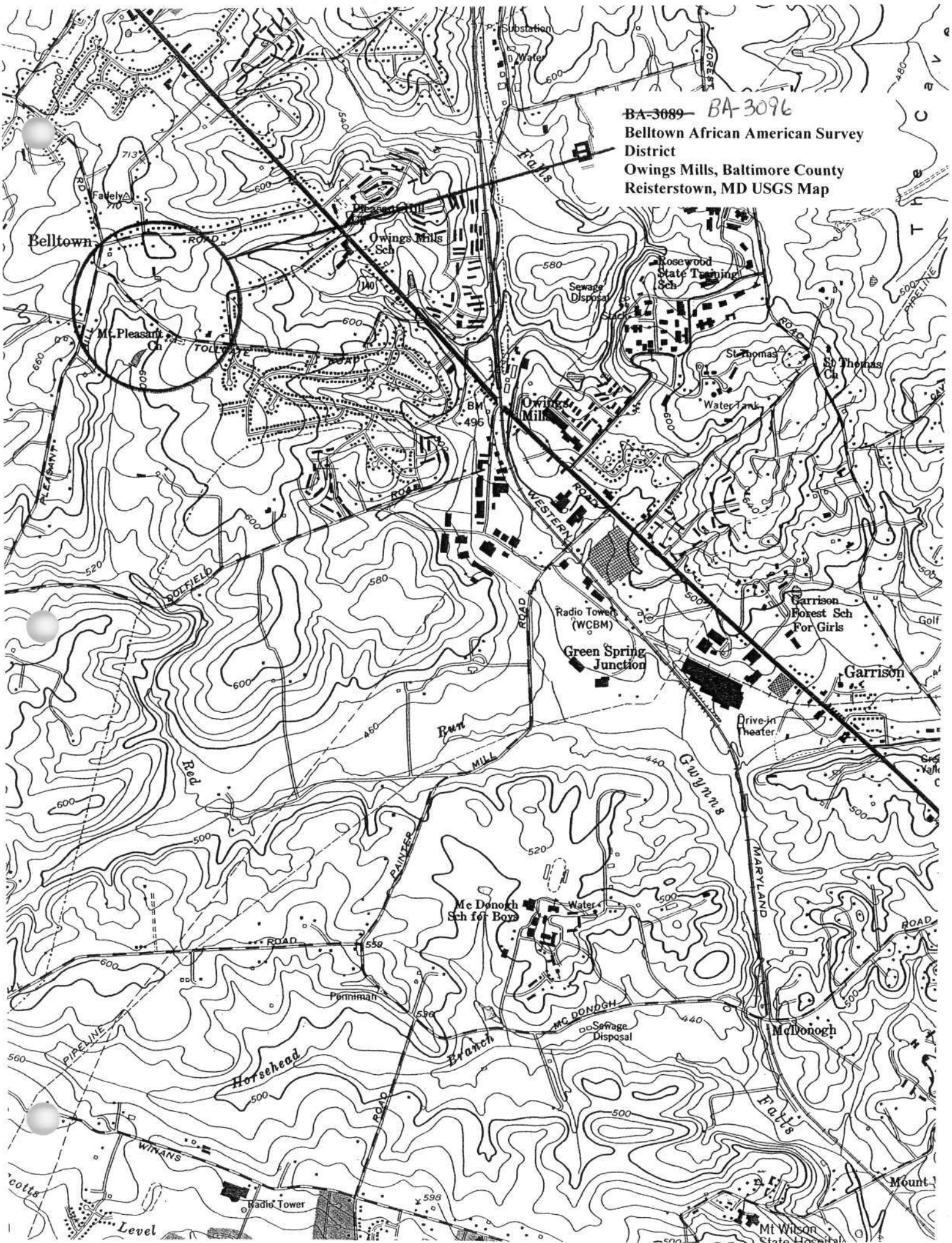
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BA-3089 BA-3096  
Belbtown African American Survey  
District  
Owings Mills, Baltimore County  
Reisterstown, MD USGS Map





BA-3096

BELTOWN AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT

OWINGS MILLS, MD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

2/2003

MD SHPO

137 and 135 Pleasant Hill Road, View looking east

1 of 6



BA-3096

BELTOWN AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT

OWINGS MILLS

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

2/2003

MD SHPO

MT. PLEASANT A.M.E. CHURCH CEMETERY, VIEW LOOKING SE

2 of 6





BA-3096

BELTDOWN AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT

OWINGS MILLS

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

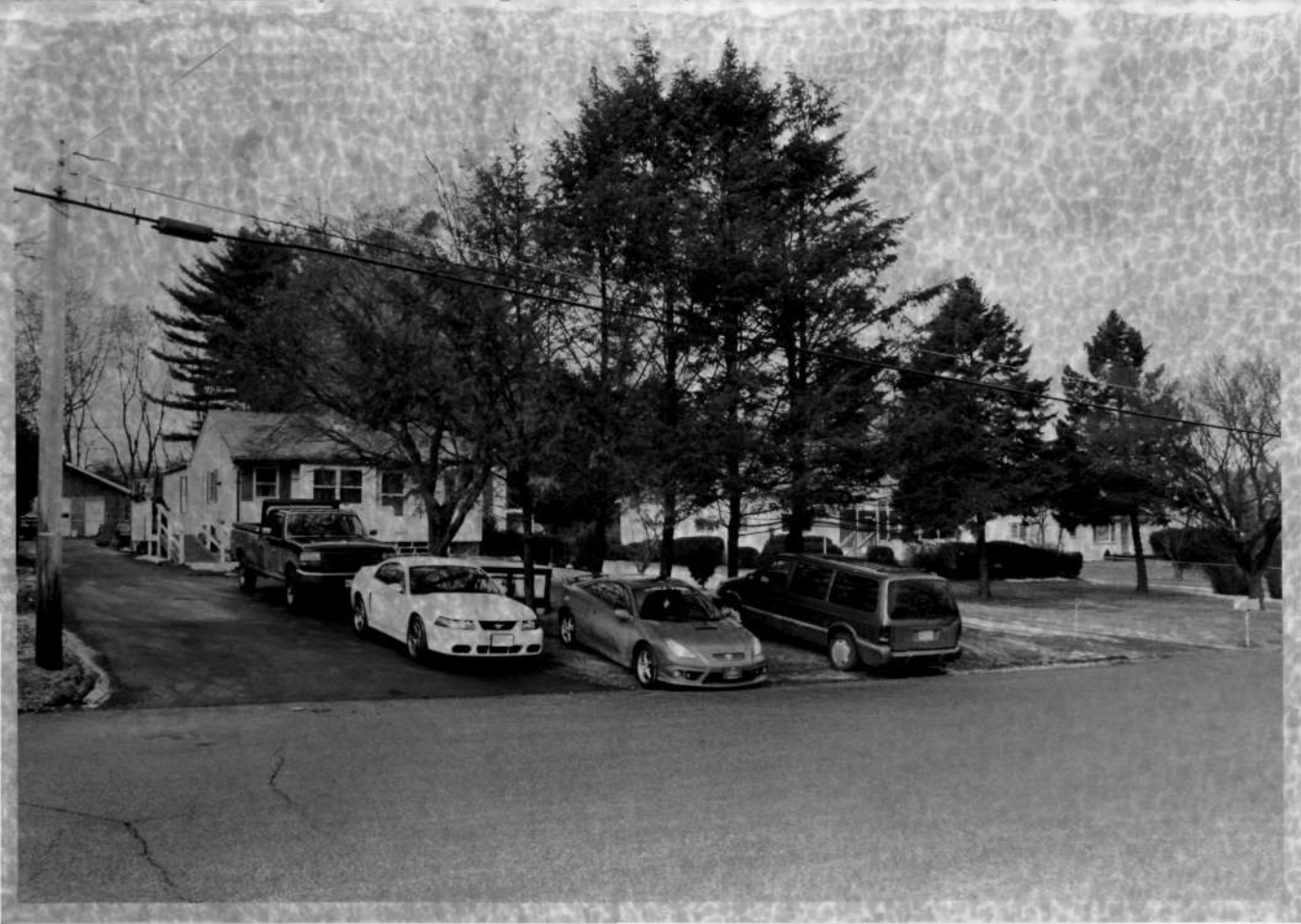
TRAILERIES

2/2003

MD SHPO

MT. PLEASANT A.M.E. CHURCH, SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

3 of 6



BA-3096

BELTOWN AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT  
OWINGS MILLS, MD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

2/2003

MD SHPO

96-88 Ritters Lane, view looking NW

4 of 6



BA-3096

BELTOWN AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT  
OWINGS MILLS,

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

2/2003

MD SHPD

86 and 82 Ritters LANE, view looking NW

5 of 6



BA-3096  
BELLTOWN AFRICAN AMERICAN SURVEY DISTRICT  
OWINGS MILLS  
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD  
TRACERIES  
2/2003  
MD SHPO

200 Tollgate Road, view looking NW  
6 of 6